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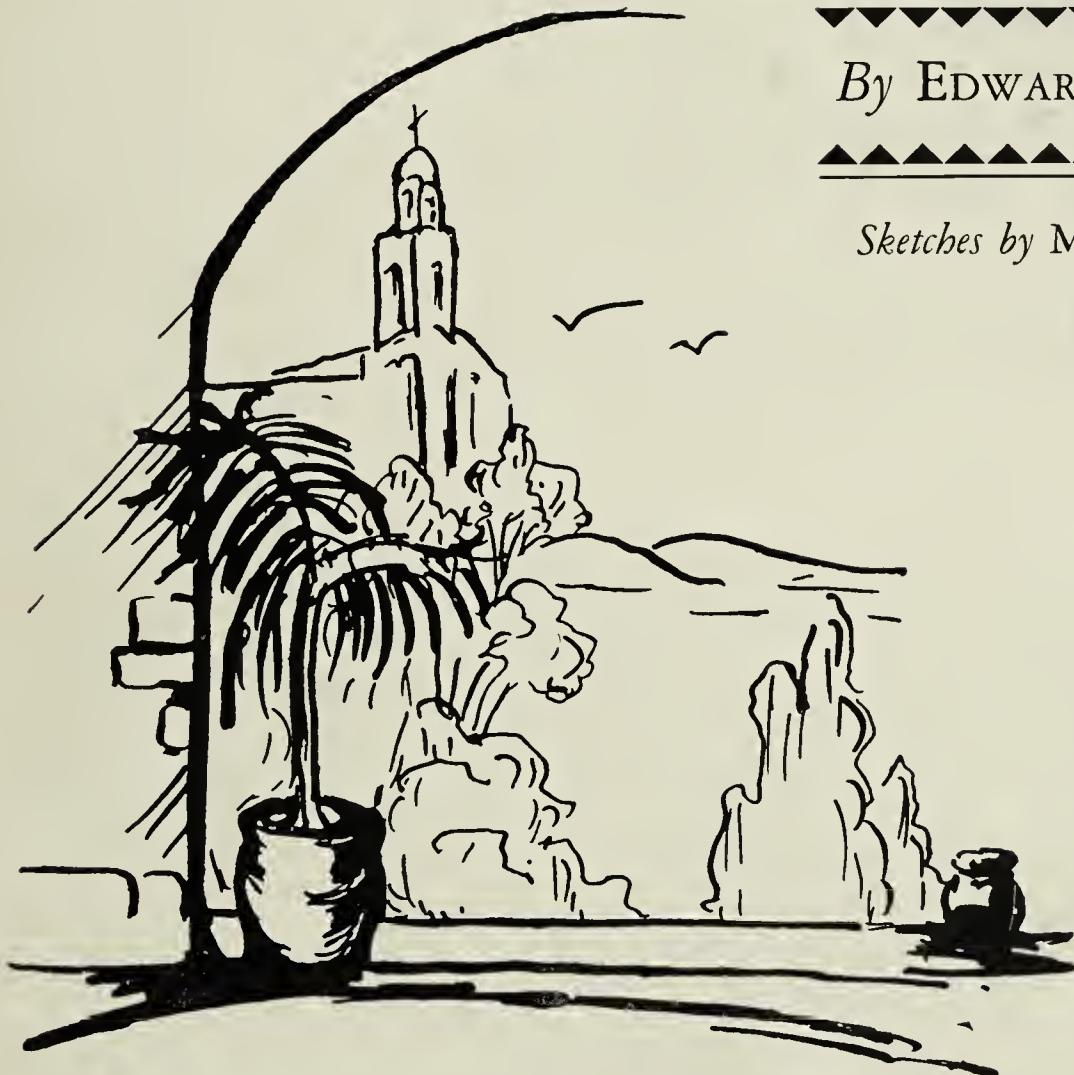
# ACROSS THE BORDER

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By EDWARD D. GAYLORD

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*Sketches by MARY A. DEETHMAN*



THE STORY OF THE AMERICAN BOARD IN MEXICO



544 EL POPOCATEPEL

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## WHY CROSS THE MEXICAN BORDER?

**B**ECAUSE it has been crossed and is continually being crossed, from the United States into Mexico and back again. It is crossed by an increasing number of travelers who feel the lure of another world culture right at our doors. Why should one travel to Europe to see strange people and striking costumes, quaint customs and great cathedrals, when all one needs to do is to take a train for Mexico City from El Paso, or down the west coast of Mexico from Nogales? Almost at the moment of crossing the border the traveler is in another and strange civilization. To be sure, the scenery along the west coast is not different from our southwest, for the Sierra Nevadas continue down the coast in Mexico, too. There are the same coastal plains, mountains and table lands, the same fertile valleys in contrast with long stretches of arid desert.

But the people are different. Not so much those of Spanish descent, perhaps. They are a small proportion, relatively, of the population (about 10 per cent). But the Indians, who comprise 30 per cent and the Mestizos (those of mixed blood), whose number makes up 52 per cent, total some 16,000,000 all together, and they are in great contrast to the people from our side of the border.

The costumes are different: plain dark dresses of the peasant women, always with the black "rebozo" over the head; the bright colors worn by city girls and on "fiesta occasions," the picturesque garb of the "caballero," and even more the peon with his sombrero, his sarape over his shoulder, his white cotton trousers (made, we understand, all of one size and capable of reduction or expansion to fit the situation), and last of all his leather sandals.

The houses are different! The homes in the cities resemble those of the old world of Europe built closely together with barred windows facing the street, with patio and garden in the rear. The homes of the country people are huts of adobe, or often merely shelters of sticks driven into the ground with thatched roof to keep off the sun.

The country scenes are different, with the old stone arched bridges, the ox carts with huge wheels and with the yoke fastened, not about the necks, but upon the horns of the oxen; and the women washing clothes at the edge of a stream; the ubiquitous burro, sometimes almost out of sight under a great load of wood, at other times ridden by a peon, sitting way back on the haunches of the beast, feet dangling within a few inches of the ground.

The American business man has crossed the border. Ever alive to cheap land, or mineral and oil rights, which can be developed and exploited, he has acquired great land holdings, and in so doing has created many serious problems in international relations.

The border has been crossed the other way, not so much by the traveler or business man, but by hosts of Mexican laborers attracted by the comparatively high wages offered in the United States.

They have come in droves, not through the immigration offices alone, but in great numbers wherever they could get across the border without detection.

Of course, under the stress of present conditions of unemployment, thousands of them have been crossing the border back into Mexico, many of their own volition, many more sent back by local authorities in United States cities and towns.

## WHAT IS HAPPENING THERE?

The Protestant churches, too, have crossed the border, and their reason is far stronger than that of the traveler, the business man, or the Mexican laborer. To comprehend it we must look at the changes which are being made so rapidly in this neighboring country of ours. Our first thought would be that the thing which is happening in Mexico is a series of revolutions, one after the other, but that would be a very superficial reading of the events of the last two decades. Following the flight of Diaz, for so many years Mexico's dictator, have come turbulent years, but they have not been merely "sound and fury, signifying nothing." Through it all Mexico has been working, under Obregon and Calles, for a national consciousness, and toward many great reforms. Here, in brief, are some of the things which have been brought about.

1. The new national constitution is more enlightened and liberal than almost any other constitution of any great nation. Its articles are far from being realized, but they set an exceedingly high standard for government truly "of and by and for the people."

2. A partial solution of the land problem has been reached. Many of the communal lands, which long ago had been confiscated and made a part of the great estates, have been returned again to the communities, or else distributed to peasant owners.

3. The constitution has brought labor laws which provide for an eight hour day, one day of rest in seven, provision for the care of women in industry, a minimum wage, labor insurance—old age, accident, compensation and unemployment. There



is recognition of the right of labor to organize. These are only a few of the provisions for labor in the constitution.

4. There is a great program of physical betterment. Welfare, sanitary and health conditions in Mexico have undoubtedly been very bad, but the government is giving attention to public health, including work with children to reduce infant mortality. A vigorous fight is being made by means of vaccination to reduce the spread of smallpox, always a scourge in tropical countries. Another fight has been against tuberculosis, to which the Mexican, through wrong diet and undernourishment, is peculiarly liable.

5. There has been a new interest in popular education. The percentage of illiteracy in Mexico until recently has been very large, but within this last twenty years, new efforts have been made by the Mexican government and people. The emphasis is most of all on rural education, and new rural schools have been opened by the hundreds and thousands. They are often poorly equipped and wretchedly housed. Too often the teacher has had insufficient preparation. The government does little but furnish the salary, and a few school books. But the people are much in earnest. The education tends to be practical. Often the teacher lives in the community, which builds its own school, makes its own furniture and insists that the children shall be taught methods of agriculture, domestic science and other subjects immediately useful.

In connection with such rural education there has been introduced the so-called "Cultural Mission." It is a travelling group of specialists, an itinerant normal school

faculty, carrying short courses directly to the rural school teachers and to the "communities." As at present set up, a cultural mission comes into a community for an institute, which lasts thirty days with a daily intensive schedule running from six a.m. to six p.m. The staff consists of so-called "experts," usually one in agriculture, one on industry, such as pottery or weaving, one in the popular arts of music and drama, one in physical education, including recreation, and always one or more nurses and a social worker. The cultural mission presents one of the most constructively helpful movements in Mexican education. It is often called "The House of the People."

6. *Some of the most profound changes across the border are in religion.* Ever since the invasion of the Spanish the dominating religion in Mexico has been that of the Roman Catholic Church. It was virtually a foreign importation and it was added to the original nature worship and superstitious practice of the Indian people, the original inhabitants, with an insufficient attempt to make them understand the essence of the Christian Faith or to relate it to the morals and ethics of current life. The Catholic Church has built beautiful buildings all over Mexico, but unfortunately, the concern of the church has been too much its own aggrandizement and too little the interest of either Mexico or its people.

Indeed, the difficulty with all *organized* religion whether Catholic or Protestant in Mexico is that it is *foreign*. The essence of Roman Catholicism is the allegiance of the church through all its services and all its adherents to the Pope in Rome. Too

often it has connived and contrived against the government. It must also be confessed that the so-called evangelical faiths are also foreign importations. Just now the things which are most popular in Mexico are *Mexican* (that means Indian) institutions. There is a revolt against anything foreign. Mexicans are protesting against foreign religions whether they be directed from Rome or from a Mission Board in Boston.

The most fierce opposition and agitation, however, as we shall see, has been against the Roman Catholic Church, largely because it has acquired so much wealth and its church holdings have included so much of the usable land of the country.

Yet with all the government opposition, in the attitude of the people themselves there has not been much change. When men who marched in a parade in the support of Calles in his fight against the church passed the cathedral they touched their hats as a mark of respect.

In spite of the agitation in many states, the mass of the people still go to the Roman Catholic Churches while smaller numbers keep their allegiance to evangelical Christianity, Protestant Christianity as we call it.

## WHY THE AMERICAN BOARD ACROSS THE BORDER?

The answer is in just what we have been saying. All this ferment in Mexico—with the new national consciousness, the new interest in education and in the health of the people, and indeed, the whole revolutionary movement, with all its unrest, which seeks, deep down underneath, the welfare of the people—makes a great challenge to us if we have the missionary spirit and passion. For Mexico is our neighbor. Indeed it is our chief neighbor in North America, outranking Canada in population, though not in area. And Mexico stands also for all Latin America in a real sense. When we touch Canada, we touch England. When we touch Mexico, we touch not only Spain, but all Latin America, where are sixteen million white men and eighty million Indians, widely different in inheritance, tradition, custom and outlook from ourselves. When all this is considered, there is ample reason for us to cross the border with every influence which makes for better understanding and friendlier relations. The traveler may go across the border to satisfy his curiosity, the American business man for personal gain, but the American missionary crosses wishing to contribute to every agency which makes for better conditions in Mexican life, health, education, and greatest of all, a religion which is not formal, but vital.

Our Missions have made, and do make, great contributions. If the Roman Catholic Church has brought to Mexico beautiful structures and colorful liturgies, which make their appeal to an artistic people, our Churches have brought simplicity of faith and Christianity as a way of life. If the



intense interest in education, which is the product of the last two decades of national effort, is multiplying schools in Mexico, our Protestant Christianity with its educational system has made its contribution through other schools which open not only the mind, but the heart, and seek to educate in character as well as in the sciences and the arts. If the State and Federal rural schools are multiplied without adequate teachers, it has been the contribution of Mission Schools to furnish teachers for these rural centers. If the Government is seeking to improve the health of the people, Missions are making their contribution there also in better methods of housing and sanitation.

In all these ways our Protestant Missions have contributed to our neighbor over the border, and our American Board has, from the beginning, had its share.

More than ever is our friendly service needed. If we cannot conduct our churches and schools along the old lines, we can still work through them along new lines. Our missionaries seek, through every contact, to train wise Mexican leadership, to coöperate with the young Evangelical Church and to help our neighbor through this difficult period of change when she is seeking a new life for her people.

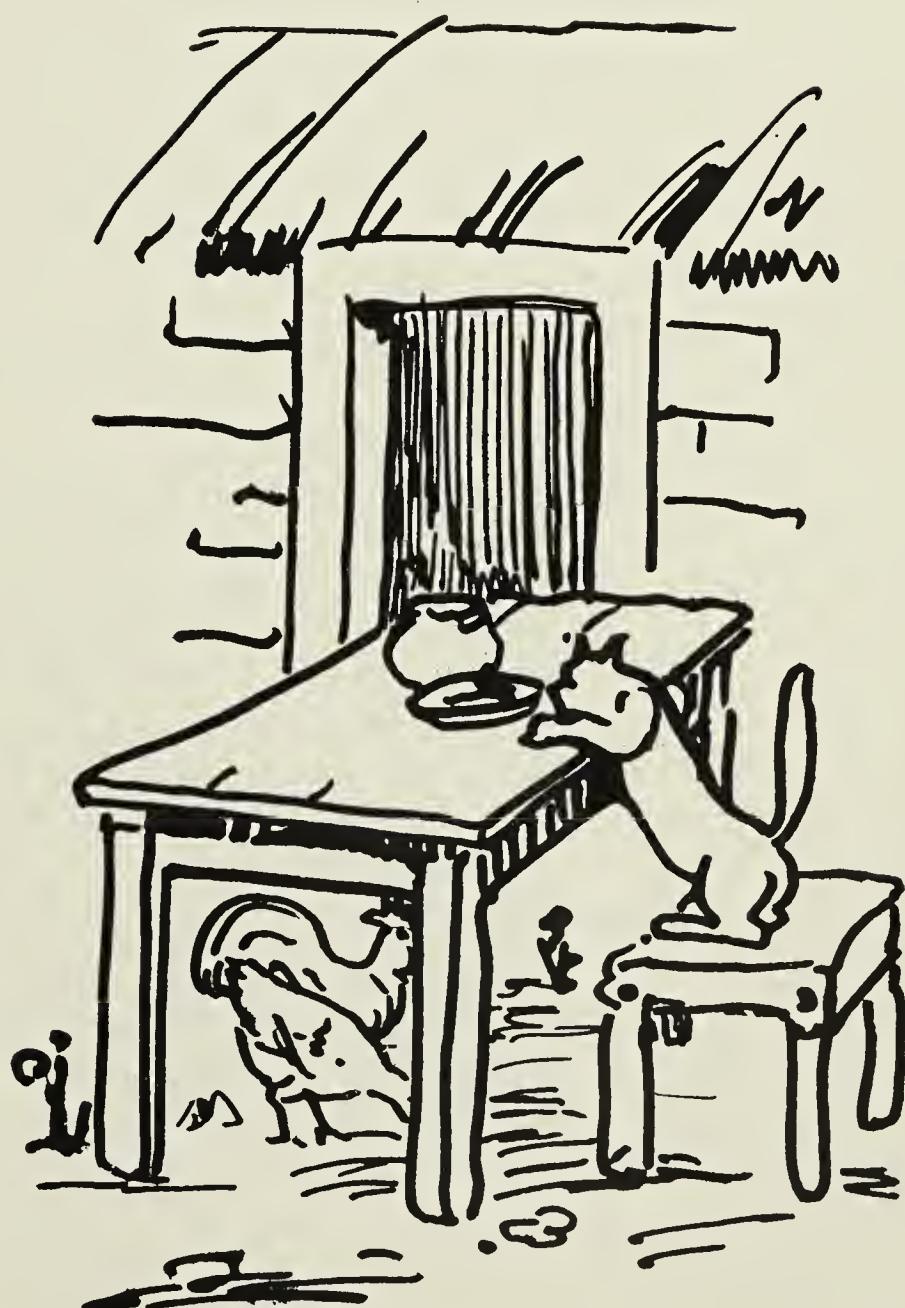
For the new Mexico of eagerly searching men and women finding themselves a new day and a new life Protestantism has a message. The Protestant missionary or pastor or believer can interpret the Jesus of history and the Christ who is the Savior of all the world. He can do so in the terms of the common people educated as well as uneducated in the modern Mexican community.

To quote from one of the Protestant writers of this new day:\*

"For us, Protestantism is the external form of Christianity. To be a Christian means to follow Christ here and now; to act in every situation as Jesus would if he faced the same problem. . . .

"Protestantism in a sense is not a religion; it is a spirit, the spirit of freedom and revolt and reform. Christianity is the religion. And that religion emerges from the historical records we have of the life and deeds of its Founder. Protestantism is the vase, but the content is Christianity. . . ."

\* From "Lupita" by Alberto Remba.



## THE STORY OF THE YEARS

The work of Congregational Christian missionaries in Mexico began as a pioneer venture of heroic souls 60 years and more ago. They are gallant years of courage and faith and accomplishment. A large volume would be needed for the story. The Calendar given here may serve as a condensed suggestive record of a thrilling story.

**1846**—Melinda Rankin of New England talks with returned soldiers from the Mexican war front and resolves, God helping her, to do what she can "for the enlightenment of her (Mexico's) long neglected people."

**1852**—Begins her Bible work at Brownsville, Texas, and opens school for Mexican children there.

**1860**—Learns of President Juarez's proclamation of religious freedom in Mexico, and opens work herself in Matamoras, across the Rio Grande from Brownsville, two years later.

**1865**—Moves to Monterey, the capital of Nuevo Leon, and establishes a permanent Protestant mission in Northern Mexico.

**1872**—American Board establishes mission to Western Mexico at Guadalajara, Jalisco, through Rev. J. L. Stephens, Rev. and Mrs. David F. Watkins.

**1873**—Miss Rankin transfers to American Board her work and property in Monterey. Woman's Board of Missions (Boston) sends Miss Caroline E. Strong of Connecticut to Monterey.

**1874**—Stephens is assassinated in March at Ahualulco, Jalisco, following months of violent opposition and bitter persecution on the part of the fanatics.

On Christmas Day of this year fifty-six are added to the church, many from Ahualulco itself; and a few months later there are "increasing opportunities for preaching" and a "growing number of inquirers."

**1877**—The "mission to Northern Mexico," received from Miss Rankin, is transferred by the American Board to the (Northern) Presbyterians.

**1881**—The Board decides to "reorganize and reconstruct" the Mission to

Western Mexico centering at Guadalajara.

Mr. and Mrs. Watkins join the Methodists South, who enter Guadalajara.

**1882**—New Congregational work starts up at Guadalajara under leadership of Rev. and Mrs. M. D. Crawford, Rev. and Mrs. John Howland, and Miss Belle M. Haskins. More emphasis is laid on education (both sexes).  
Also in this year a new "Northern Mexico Mission" is established by the Board at Chihuahua through Rev. and Mrs. James D. Eaton. Woman's Board of Missions readopts Mexico as a mission field—Mrs. Howland being supported by the women of Connecticut.  
Woman's Board of Missions for the Interior takes up work in Mexico, supporting Miss Belle M. Haskins of Kansas at Guadalajara.

**1883**—A Sunday School paper, "*La Estrella de la Manana*" (The Morning Star) begun by Mrs. Howland. In 1885 this was merged in "*El Testigo*" (The Witness), edited by Mr. Bissell and later by Mr. Howland. This was a sixteen page, illustrated bi-weekly paper that was continued until the Mission was temporarily closed in 1916.

**1884**—Girls' School opened at Guadalajara by Miss Haskins. (Followed in 1901 by Miss Alice Gleason.)

**1885**—La Barca Station opened in Jalisco by Rev. and Mrs. Henry M. Bissell of Guadalajara.

Parral Station opened in state of Chihuahua by Rev. and Mrs. Al- den B. Case and Miss Elizabeth Keyes of Chihuahua station.

Hermosillo Station opened in state of Sonora by Crawfords transferred from Jalisco.

Mr. Howland opens training class for boys and young men at Guadalajara.

**1886**—Miss Isabella Ferris opens school at Chihuahua. (This reorganized in 1894 as the Mission's normal school by Miss Mary L. Hammond from Guadalajara, under name of "Colegio Chihuahuense.")  
Parral School begun by Miss Elizabeth Keyes. (Later it is called "El Progreso" under Misses Nellie O. Prescott and Mary Dunning who had been at Chihuahua. Still going under Southern Methodists.)

**1890**—Theological Training School opened at Ciudad Juarez (on Mexico side of Rio Grande, opposite El Paso, Texas) by Rev. A. C. Wright who with Mrs. Wright joined the Northern Mexico Mission in 1886. (The next year the school was moved across into El Paso.)

**1891**—El Fuerte Station, in the state of Sinaloa, is opened by the Bissells transferred from Jalisco.  
Rev. Otis C. Olds moves into Cos- huiriachic in Chihuahua.  
Board consolidates the two Mexican missions into one, called the "Mexico Mission."

1895—Rev. and Mrs. H. T. Wagner transferred from Guadalajara to Parral, later to Guerrero, and finally to Hermosillo for "itinerant work along the West Coast."

1900—Theological Training School moved from El Paso to Guadalajara and given name "Colegio Internacional." (This is still going, though not as a seminary.)

1908—Corporation formed in Mexico to hold property under Mexican laws.

1914—Famous interdenominational conference at Cincinnati, Ohio, composed of secretaries and missionaries representing Protestant Boards at work in Mexico. Decision in favor of assignment of territory for "primary responsibility for evangelization and education" with consequent exchange of property below the Border.

1917—Congregationalists give up Chihuahua to Methodists South, latter turn over West Coast to Congregationalists, including work at Culiacan and Mazatlan in Sinaloa. Methodists leave Jalisco.  
Union Theological Seminary opens at Mexico City, Dr. Howland being first president. (Seminary still going.)

1918—The Instituto, or school, for girls reopened at Guadalajara under the Woman's Board of Missions, continuing also the "Colegio Chihuahuense." The school takes the name of "Instituto Colon" under Miss Mary Long and later Miss Margarita Wright. (Closed in 1934 because of Mexican laws.) "Instituto Corona" opened at Hermosillo by Woman's Board of the Interior, Miss L. Frances Smith being in charge. (Closed in 1934 under Mexican laws.)

1922—School at Mazatlan taken over by Woman's Board for the Pacific and named "El Pacifico."

1928—Southern California Conference receives from the American Board administrative control of all work and workers below the Border, exclusive of the Union Seminary, etc., in Mexico City—the Board continuing its financial support of the work.

Needless to say, space has not permitted our recording the names and contributions of several more missionaries who from time to time have served with fidelity and distinction the evangelical cause in Mexico. Such, we mean, as Rev. Harold Barber and Barbara Howland Barber of Mazatlan; Professor and Mrs. Louis B. Fritts of the West Coast and Guadalajara; Miss Julia T. Wagner of Mazatlan; and Professor Leavitt C. Wright and Marion Howland Wright of Guadalajara.

Nor have we mentioned the Mexican leaders themselves without whom little could have been done during these sixty-one years of trying work since Stephens was martyred.

This work is still going on. It is the child of Congregational Churches, we cannot abandon it, but must care for it until it has been so developed, and Mexico has been so developed, that the Mexicans

themselves can take the full responsibility and carry it forward.

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DIRECTS WORK

Since the work all through these years has been the distinct work of the American Board, one may well ask why the action of the Board in giving it into the care of the Southern California Congregational Conference in 1928?

The Mexico West Coast, where most of our work is located is three thousand miles and more from the Boston offices of the Board, while it is only five hundred miles from Los Angeles. There are few Mexicans in Boston, while Los Angeles is the largest Mexican city in the world outside of Mexico City itself and possibly Guadalajara.

Because of this nearness to Mexico, a closer human contact with Southern California might help to give strength to the Mission.

Each year since that date some visitor and often delegations from the Conference of Southern California have visited the field.\* Each year a fraternal delegate has come from the Mexico Junta to attend the Southern Cali-

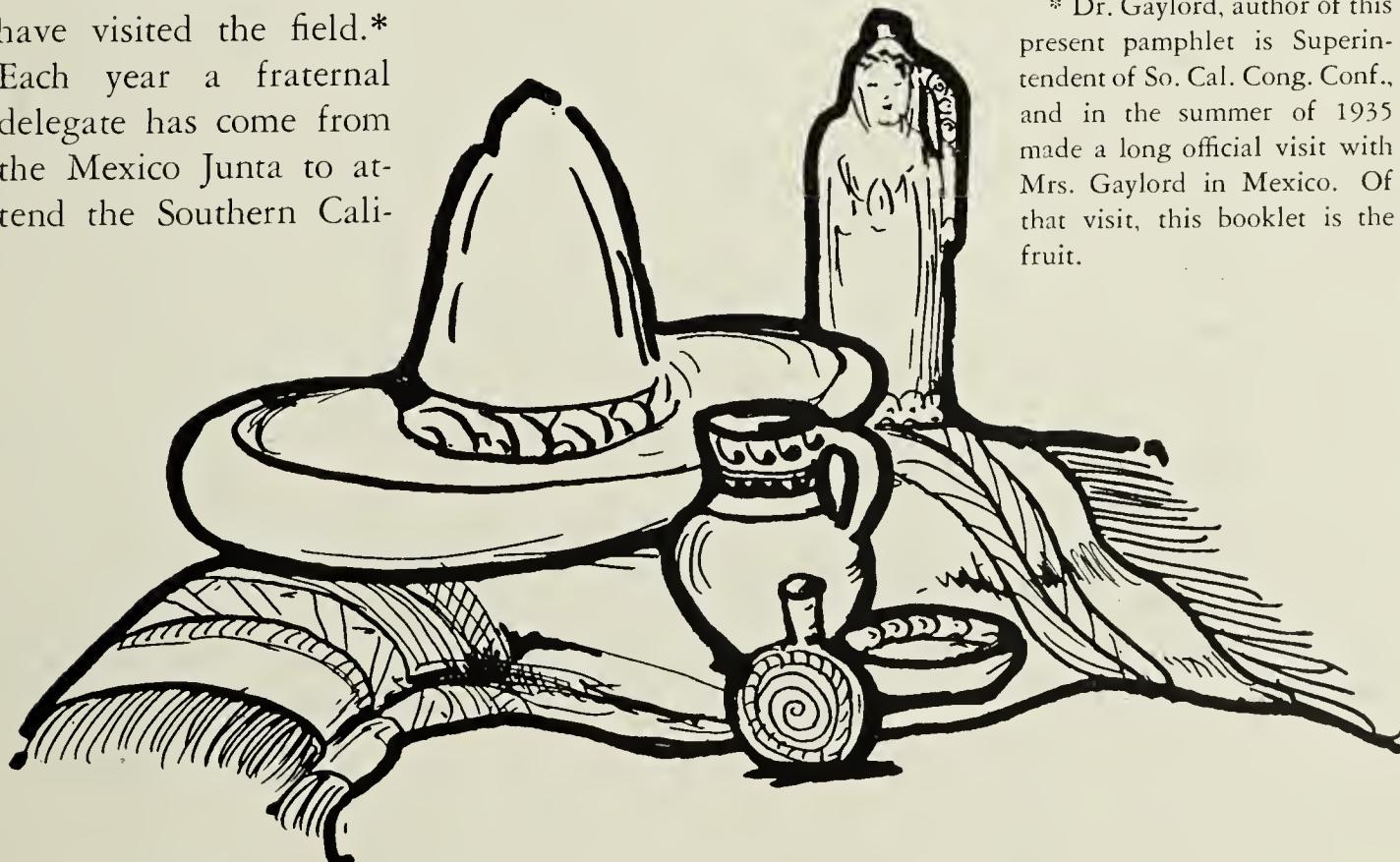
fornia State Conference meeting. Through this close relationship there has been established a fellowship which has been reassuring and sustaining to the workers through these difficult years of our Mexico Mission.

On the field of course there is an organization for administering churches and all activities of the mission. This corresponds to a State Conference with us and is called the "Junta."

It ought to be clearly understood, however, that while the Southern California Congregational Conference assumes the oversight of the work, it does not assume its financial support; for that comes from the treasury of the American Board.

On the other hand, the earnest desire is that this close touch with Mexico might so increase the interest of the churches in Southern California that their gifts for the foreign mission work of the American Board all over the world would be greatly increased. It was also hoped that the Conference might act as an interpreter of Mexico to the fellowship of our Congregational churches in the United States.

\* Dr. Gaylord, author of this present pamphlet is Superintendent of So. Cal. Cong. Conf., and in the summer of 1935 made a long official visit with Mrs. Gaylord in Mexico. Of that visit, this booklet is the fruit.



## THE PRESENT RELIGIOUS SITUATION

There are so many conflicting opinions as to what is happening in Mexico today that in order to provide a really understanding basis for our friendship with our fellow Christians in Mexico we must pause to get at the truth of Mexico's difficulty. It is wise, however, to be modest and not assume all knowledge for even in the few weeks that elapse for the printing of a leaflet like this the situation changes. Prophecy is uncertain, generalization impossible.

In spite of this the opinion seems to prevail that the present government is fairly stable. It represents a strange mixture of elements. There are the extremely radical elements, convinced Marxists. There are the moderates, though firmly committed to the principles of the social revolutionary party; and there are also the capitalists.

In the attitude of the government toward religion, it is equally hard to generalize. There are undoubtedly those Marxists, like the recent Governor of Tabasco, who is in intense opposition to all organized religion. There are others who say they are not opposed to religion, but are bitterly opposed to religious institutions which, either secretly or openly, are working against the state. There is no question that the long history of the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico has had a determining influence on the religious policy of the government, at this very point. It is possible that the swing

may be still further to the left, and that the attitude will approach that of Russia toward all organized religion. The present government is an agrarian movement, and seeks to restore the land and privileges to the people.

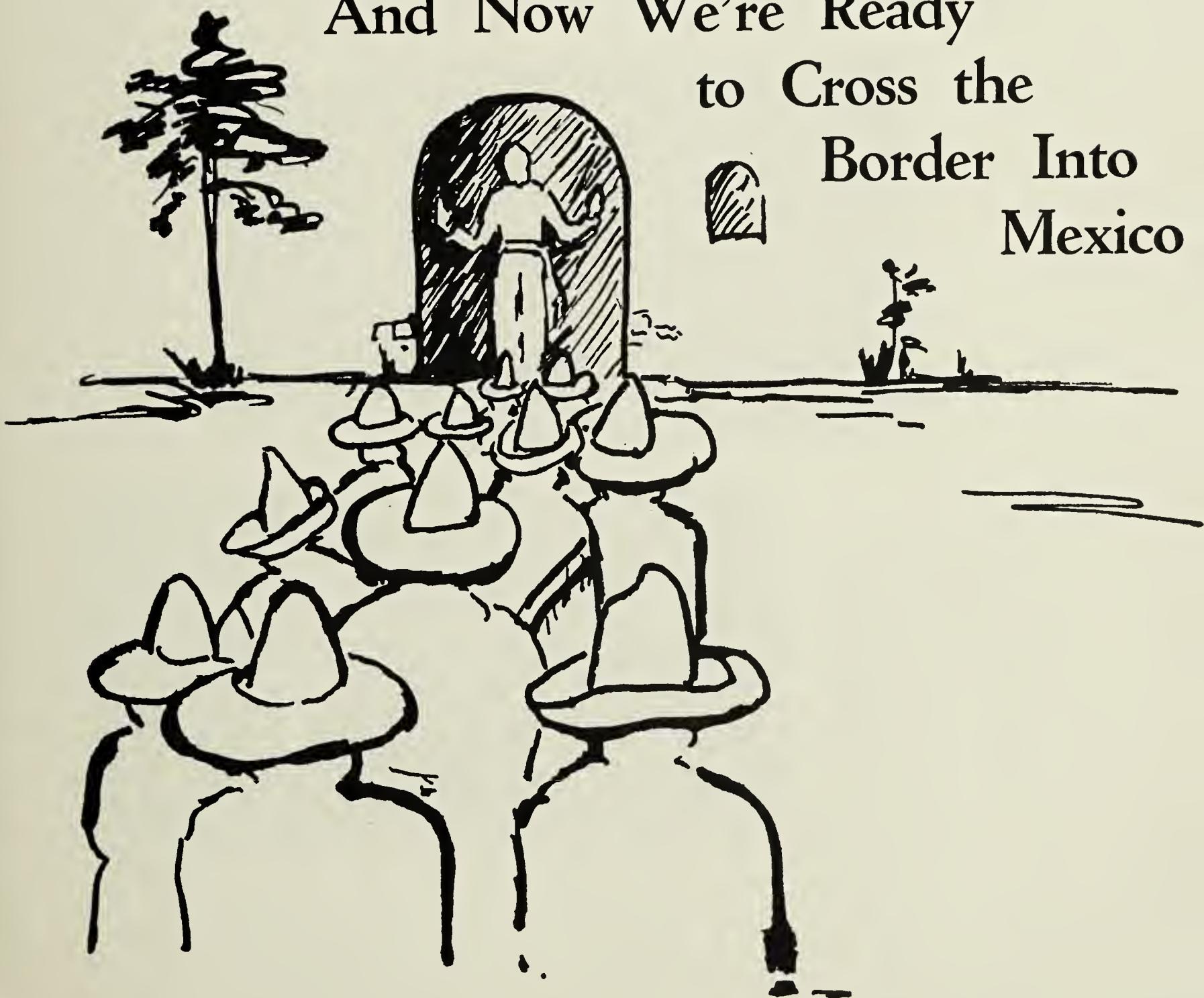
Of course, all this has a direct influence upon our American Board work. As we have already said, the churches have all been closed in the states of Sonora and Sinaloa, for these are radical states. This affects all of the Protestant churches there. Their doors are shut and sealed, although the pastors are permitted to live in the parsonages. The extreme has been seen in the State of Tabasco, where not only have the churches been closed, but the images from them have been brought out and burned. Indeed, it is reported that when the supply has given out, other images have been manufactured in order that the demonstration against religion might continue, and an impression be made on the people. On the other hand, in the states of Nayarit and Jalisco no restriction against the church has been enforced, except that the number of ministers is limited to one to every 20,000 of the population. In these two states our churches are open and the work is going on as usual.

When it comes to the schools, the attitude of the Federal Government is decidedly against all private education. In an interview with President Cardenas he is reported to have said that without any

question the government will go farther than it has in the matter of assuming all educational functions, and that elementary education through private schools would be eliminated. It is even possible that the government may go still farther and that institutions like social settlements will also be prohibited, especially if they are occupying buildings of any size and importance. In states where radical tendencies are not so evident, and the attitude of the local officials has been friendly the private schools maintained by Missions have been able to remain open, but

more recent agitation has closed practically all of the elementary schools. Among these have been the schools for girls, founded by our Board in Hermosillo, and in Guadalajara. The school in Mazatlan has been in uncertainty, but for the present seems likely to go on. Our fourth and remaining school, the boys' school at Guadalajara, is continued as a secondary school. How our pastors and churches and our school workers are meeting this situation will be spoken of later as we cross the border and visit the places where our work is and has been.

## And Now We're Ready to Cross the Border Into Mexico





*The Roman Catholic Church has built beautiful, stately churches in Mexico, like this cathedral in Guadalajara.*

*And Protestant churches, like the one below, seem insignificant, and as buildings are unattractive, but their children and young people are full of promising material.*



*And the "Junta" or Conference governing the Congregational Christian branch of the Evangelical Church in Mexico takes its work seriously and courageously.*



*Ramona Salazar, head of the "House of Good Will" in Guadalajara is snapped with one of her teachers, Senorita Alvarez (right).*



*Below is a group trained as teachers in our settlement. They teach in rural schools under the government.*



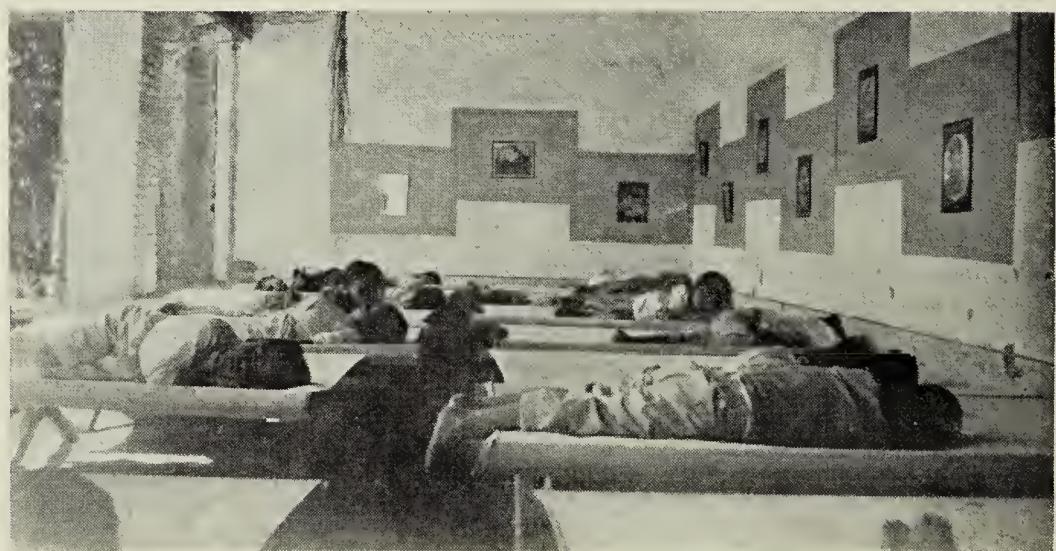
*The Board of Directors of the House of Good Will plans a Christian ministry to the whole community.*



*Nursery School*



*and Practice Gardening*



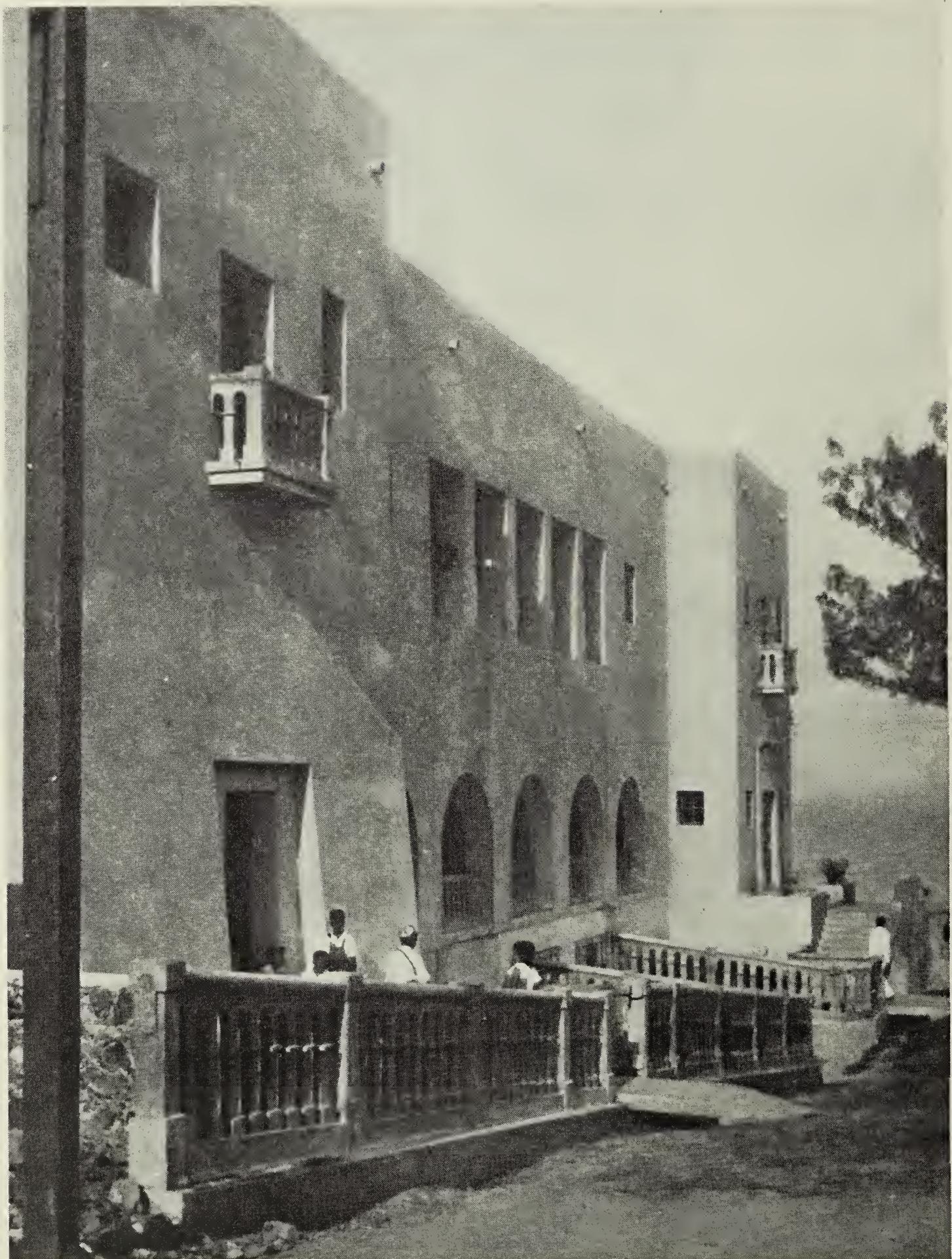
*and a Dormitory for Street Waifs*

*The patio of the School is cool and attractive in Guadalajara—a city over five thousand feet above the sea.*



*And the fellowship is like that of one big family as Pastor and Mrs. Zambrano and Baby Saul, Mrs. Galvan, Mrs. Paz, and Mrs. Gutierrez and Baby Genaro can testify. Also Professor Abel Comacho, Mrs. Comacho and little Abel, and of course Priscilla Holton Neff and the twins, Charles Barton and John Michael Neff.*



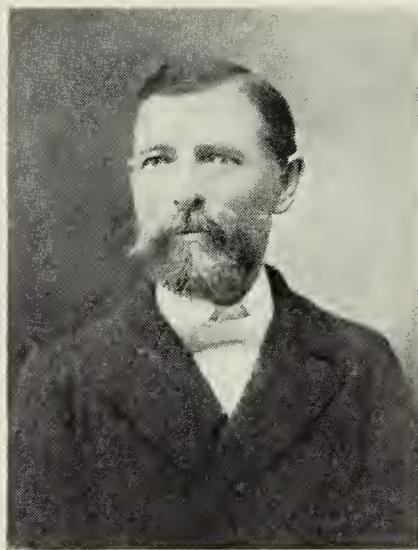


## They Builded Well in Schools and Churches— Those Pioneers

*On the page opposite is El Pacifico on the hill above lovely Mazatlan. This school, now reopened, works on in the spirit of those great missionary leaders.*



*Dr. and Mrs.  
James D.  
Eaton  
who laid  
deep and  
abiding  
foundations  
in Northern  
Mexico*



*Dr. and Mrs. John How-  
land both in Guadalajara  
and in Mexico City won  
the hearts and confidence*



*of Mexicans and Ameri-  
cans to an unusual degree.  
They were most influen-  
tial in shaping the policy  
of the Evangelical leaders.*



*Dr. and Mrs.  
Alfred Wright  
must also be  
classed among  
the Immortals  
of the Board  
in Mexico.*



## The Real Hope Is in Young Mexico

*The Mission's newest venture is its camp modelled after some of our Young People's camps, but with its own leadership and program.*

*Professor Camargo of the World's S.S. Assn. is its inspiration—he stands second from the left in the "quartet picture."*



*Chow at Camp*



*Washing Up*



*Sunset*

*Service*

## FROM NOGALES TO HERMOSILLO\*

Those of us who enter Mexico on the Southern Pacific Railroad will cross the border at Nogales, a sort of American-Mexican "Twin Cities." After our permission to enter has been stamped by various immigration officials, and we have gone through the customs, sometimes a slow process, we can use the long wait until our train pulls out from Nogales by looking up the pastor of our American church there, Dr. O. A. Smith.

He will have the most interesting things to tell about his church and his experiences in social work as representative of our Congregational Home Missionary Society, in which he has given aid to many a bewildered Mexican immigrant and relieved many a perplexed Mexican family finding it hard to understand immigration restrictions.

We will ask him to tell us something of the problem of American born Mexican children returned with their parents to Mexico in these recent days, almost citizens without a country.

Leaving on one side Cumpas, where our little church is carried on by lay people, a comparatively short ride of about six hours (see map) will bring the traveller to Hermosillo, called that, he learns, because its name "Little Beauty" is appropriate not only to its beautiful situation, but also because of the unusual number of handsome women who are supposed to dwell therein.

But our interest is in the school, the Instituto Corona, and the church, which, for so many years, did splendid service. The

\* See map on page 31.

school, as we have seen, was recently closed and later the church property was appropriated by the government as the headquarters of a worker's society and used for offices and recreational purposes.

This is the only case where one of our mission buildings has been appropriated.

So the work now is left to a small but loyal group of lay people to carry on, as a Protestant fellowship, without a building until better days make it possible for them to worship together once more.

## DOWN THE COAST WE GO

Leaving Hermosillo, the next point of interest on the coast is Guaymas. The city, beautifully located on the bay, with fine palms, flowers and Spanish and Moorish houses is unusually attractive. Here we have had a little church, but like all the other churches in the state of Sonora, the building is closed and only the lay members are left to keep the spirit of free evangelical Christianity alive.

Our next stop will be Los Mochis, also near the sea, but what a contrast to Guaymas! The former is a beautiful seaside town, but Los Mochis is industrial, the heart of a beet sugar section, with factories built and run by American capital.

The work for a new building was abruptly terminated when the government closed the church, but our pastor, Rev. F. Alvidrez, still occupies the parsonage, and is seeking in quiet ways among the people to carry on Christian work, according to the program explained on page 26. There is a tremendous need and opportunity for social work here.

Returning to the railroad the traveller proceeds south to Culiacan, the capital of



the state of Sinaloa, a city well worth a visit, for its own sake.

Here the Board has an adequate church property and a loyal group of workers. It has been the center of a number of smaller towns, visited from time to time by the pastor in Culiacan. But again, with the closing of the church, the work is being done by fine lay people, with an occasional visit from Rev. David Castillo of Mazatlan.

### THE GEM OF THE WEST COAST MAZATLAN

"Beautiful in situation, the gem of the West Coast" is Mazatlan—to paraphrase the words of the psalm. No words are quite adequate to give the picture of this city lying on a picturesque peninsula, with its rocky promontories, its curving beaches and its rows of coconut palms.

But again its chief attraction to Congregationalists is the beautiful new building of our school, the Colegio-el-Pacifico, which was completed about six years ago. Situated upon one of the rocky bluffs occupying part of the old mission residence property, the school has the choicest location in the whole of Mazatlan.

The building of the beautiful new school was long planned by the women of the Women's Board of Missions of the Pacific. Under Mr. Fred M. Wilcox's vigorous leadership, assisted by Mr. Frank Olmstead, an engineer, the building brought a large enrollment and the development of an exceedingly interesting piece of work, the establishment of a normal school to train teachers for the rural schools.

This plan was just proving itself when the government attitude toward education made the schools' situation precarious. However, we hope to keep it open and alive to its present great opportunity for service.

Our church in Mazatlan has also felt government restriction, but the pastor, Rev. David Castillo, remains in the parsonage and is working on the adapted program which the pastors worked out in their last Junta meeting. (See page 26.) Quietly and with resourcefulness he is organizing his work among the boys and the various character building agencies.

### WE VISIT POZOLE AND TEPIC

One of the most interesting bits of work in all the Mission was that of our little church at Pozole, off the railroad, about eighty miles from Mazatlan. Here for many years Rev. T. Gomez was both pastor of the church and baker for the

village. Like Paul of old, he did his work of ministry.

His place is now taken by a younger man, who, undaunted by the government closing of the church, is seeking to work out a program of Christian training and social service.

At Tepic, we shall pause a bit to visit our church and become acquainted with Pastor Pinera. As this church is in Nayarit, where there is no restriction of the churches as yet, Pastor Pinera not only leads his flock, but maintains contacts with the prisoners in the jail, with families in the little outlying villages, and seeks to make his church minister to the whole community.

## THE HEART OF THE HIGHLANDS GUADALAJARA

Next we pass through some very picturesque country in the "barrancas" on one of the most scenic rides the traveller meets anywhere. Guadalajara, named from the Moorish city by the same name in Spain, rests 5,200 feet above the sea level, and has a population of 140,000. One of the cleanest, brightest, and healthiest of Mexican cities, its climate is delightful, and next to Mexico City, there is no more attractive town in all Mexico. The tourist finds much to interest him. It is a city of churches, many of them strikingly beautiful in their architecture. The residential sections are extremely fine, both in their homes and in the gardens surrounding them.

But again our interest is in the schools and our mission work. The Federal Government restrictions on private elementary education brought an order in 1934 to close

our girls school, the Colon. The Colegio has carried on in its upper classes and will be continued as a preparatory rather than an elementary school.

But beyond the work of the school itself is the influence of our missionary family there, Rev. and Mrs. Clarence A. Neff. Not only have they worked in close connection with the schools and the church in Guadalajara, but they have maintained contacts with the whole city. Their home has been open to the school boys, to city groups, and to foreign residents and visitors, the home itself being an interpretation of truly Christian ideals and friendliness.

No small feature has been the coming of the twins, Charles Barton and John Michael, now about three years old and fairly fluent bi-linguists. Mrs. Neff's care of the twins has been a lesson in the care of children to many a Mexican mother.

Mr. Neff conducts a weekly forum in the old museum which is largely attended, not only by the group of intelligent Mexicans, but also by nationals of other countries resident in the city. It is truly an international forum and its influence extends in a wide circle.

It is in Guadalajara that we have the strongest of our Mexican churches. One of the oldest, it has by far the largest membership and it is most ably led by Mr. Zambrano, a truly eloquent preacher and a man of enthusiasm. For several years Mr. Zambrano has sent his laymen out touring the villages lying about the city, a real school of evangelism.



Here too, we have a third work, established in 1932, when Miss Ramona Salazar returned to Mexico, after special study in California to open a Social Center, the "Casa de Buena Voluntad" or in English "The House of Good Will." Miss Salazar is also a graduate of Pomona College, and specially fitted for her work.

Though so recently organized, it has already a very wide circle of usefulness. In it is a nursery school and a kindergarten. There are classes for stated periods in which the teachers are well known educators in the city who contribute their services. There is an evening school for working people. There are volunteer

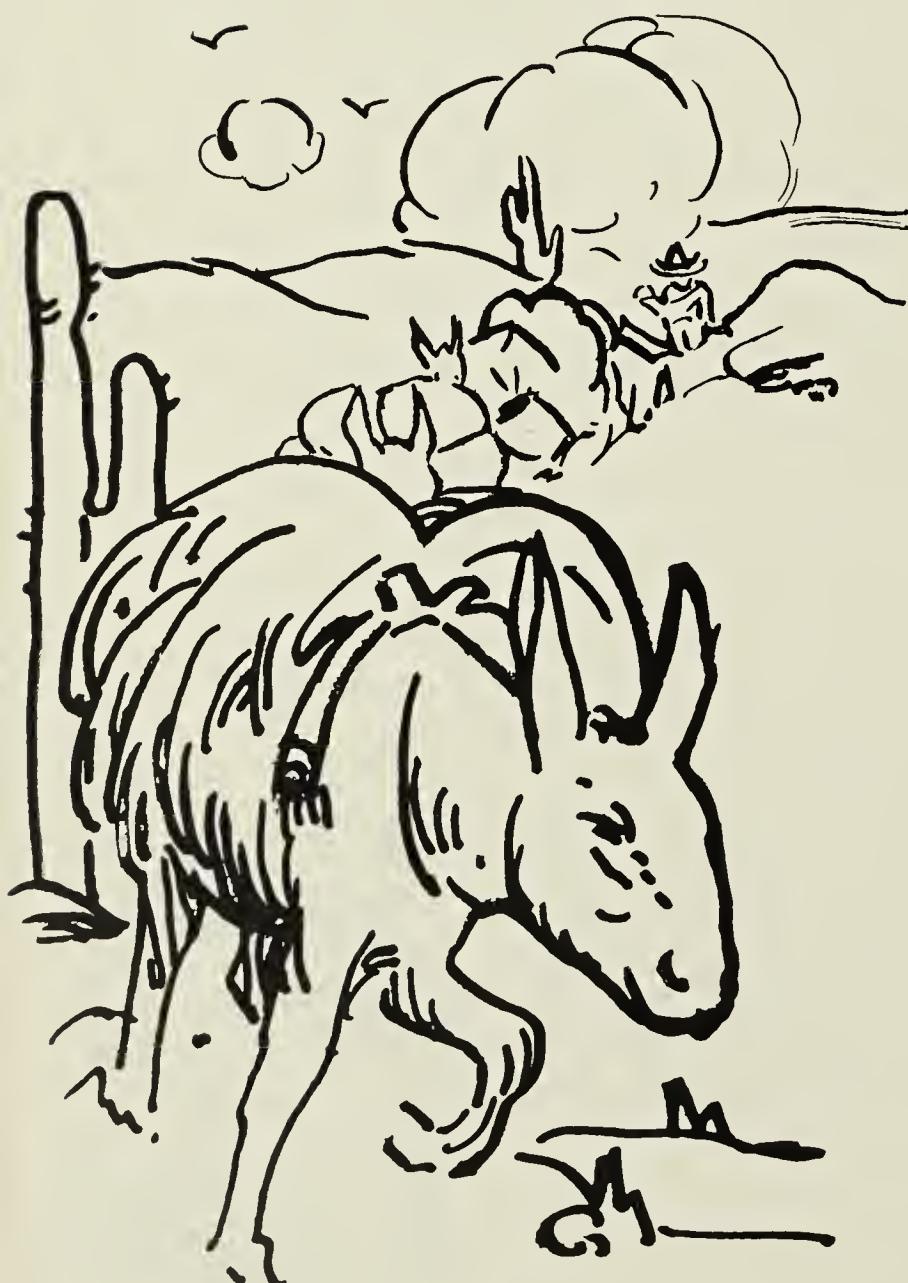
classes on Saturdays. There is recreational work, a library, a Parent-Teachers Association, and a Clinic in which four physicians contribute their services. All this is a splendid record for three years' work. Thirty-six American and Mexican helpers assist there. It also seems to show a way in which our Mission can render large service in neighborly fashion to the Mexico of the future.

### OUT FROM GUADALAJARA

Around Guadalajara at greater or lesser distances are groups of most interesting churches. The first is Tlajonulco, a smaller church, where Rev. A. Hernandez and his wife are ministering, with a broad program of personal work and home service. In another direction lies Ameca, where there is a group of devoted people who have known the fires of persecution: their pastor is Rev. Daniel Gutierrez. About fourteen miles from Ameca is Ahualulco, which had its baptism of blood in the martyrdom of Mr. Stephens in the early days. Recently a new, adequate and attractive church building was erected. The young pastor is Rev. Francisco Flores.

Still farther removed, up in the mountains, is Autlan, where Rev. M. M. Elias, one of our older ministers, is pastor. Shortly after his arrival Autlan was visited with an earthquake, destroying the church building and wrecking numberless homes. Fortunately, the Junta and our schools in Guadalajara were able to make some contribution from their budgets and Mr. Elias gave himself to the work of relief. It opened the door into the hearts of the people.

Now the Autlan church has acquired a new situation and is making preparations



to put up their own new building. Mr. Elias writes with all the enthusiasm of a new volunteer, "We are engaged in a glorious adventure for souls for Jesus Christ."

### ENDING AT MEXICO CITY

No traveller to Mexico would wish to omit Mexico City, the heart of the republic. He will not fail, however, to get in touch with our Seminary, "Seminario Evangelico de Mexico," and the missionary group there. Nowhere will he receive a more cordial welcome, and nowhere can

he find such a sympathetic understanding of Mexico and so much enlightenment on present conditions as in that missionary group.

Union Seminary has given much thought to adapting its work to the new and changing conditions. With so many of the churches closed the number of ministerial candidates is not large, but, in addition to training these, the seminary is introducing short term courses for picked lay workers, and is taking the seminary out to the churches in a series of institutes and conferences, from which already many practical and helpful results have been obtained.

## "NEW OCCASIONS TEACH NEW DUTIES"

### THE CHURCHES

In spite of discouragements and hindrances to the work, the spirit of our Mexican Congregational ministers was never finer, never more courageous and in earnest.

The Junta meeting this year was a marked contrast to some others. There were no long discussions over business, no seeking for places, but only the desire to find a way in which Christian work could be carried on.

A new policy was introduced this year. Every morning an Institute was held which was an extension course for our pastors. The Junta was fortunate indeed in having

Prof. Camargo who spoke every morning on Religious Education, Parent Education, the Daily Vacation Bible School, literature available, and the possibility of boys' and girls' camps. Prof. Davis of the Union Seminary, Mr. Neff, and Director Comacho also gave addresses. Miss Ramona Salazar gave a series of lectures on social work. There were other talks on the work of a pastor, and parent education. The men listened eagerly and thoughtfully.

It was voted unanimously that at the Junta meeting next year another such Institute should be planned under the direction of Professors Davis and Camargo.

In the afternoons there were long and interested discussions as to the possibility of keeping on with Christian work. Where the churches were closed, should we retire in defeat? Or was there some way to continue? In the possibility that other churches should be closed, must there not be preparation in advance for a changed form of work?

After conferences with leaders the pastors themselves worked out their **program** which has to do with family visitation and pastoral care. Even if the pastor cannot preach, he can visit his families, read and pray with them, help them in methods of Bible study, and in family worship, and give encouragement and help. He can also train lay workers to do personal work, such as calling on the families, and going out as personal evangelists into outlying villages. There are also possibilities of social and welfare work, in community activities, in coöoperating with physicians and others for better health centers, in studying better methods of agriculture and poultry raising, in boys and girls clubs, and in summer camps.

To this end, a nine weeks' training institute was projected to be held in Ahualulco some time during the year, to be set up and staffed by the Union Seminary and Professor Camargo.

There should also be local institutes for the training of layworkers at home in their own villages and towns. Indeed, Professor Camargo, after the Junta meeting, visited three or four fields and held short institutes from which a fine report has already come. He had already set up a camp over the weekend following the Junta, in which our pastors had an opportunity to see all the possibilities of camping program.

It is ambitious, this plan. No one pastor can do all of it, but it is extremely suggestive of how the work may yet go on, even though church services, as we think of them, may not be held—even though pastors may not preach. Here is their unanimously adopted program:—

## FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

"The Gospel is pre-eminently social, and is superior to any other of the so-called systems of social redemption, as the universal experience has shown in successive epochs of human history. Any social program which denies, or fails to practice the fundamental principles of Jesus, does not satisfy human needs. Social work is only a means to the end of personal and collective salvation."

## THE PROGRAM OF THE MEXICAN CHURCHES

### I. *Evangelical Work*

(1) Where church buildings are open, let the necessary steps be taken so that if they are closed, the work which must be done shall already have been prepared.

(2) Where church buildings are closed:

(a) The Church shall be organized in the form most adequate for the conservation of a fraternal communion.

(b) Activities of the members: The brethren shall visit each other frequently, taking as the theme of their conversations some topic from the Bible, and dedicating a few moments to prayer.

Every head of a family shall convert himself into the minister of his home,

calling the members of the family together daily to study the Bible and pray. Let every member be an evangelist and wherever possible, let them organize themselves into study groups.

(c) Activities of the Pastor: More intense pastoral visitation, giving attention to the sick, the afflicted and the needy. Instruct families in family worship. Furnish to the families adequate literature for worship. Intensify personal evangelism among the unconverted.

## II. *Social Service* (Ministry to the Community)

- (1) Medical work in coöperation with existing institutions
  - (a) Clinics
  - (b) Lectures
  - (c) Sanitary Brigades
- (2) Cultural work
  - (a) Clubs
  - (b) Literary Societies
  - (c) Night Classes
  - (d) Libraries
- (3) Recreational work, wholesome amusements
- (4) Sports work
  - (a) Camps
  - (b) Athletics
  - (c) Boy Scouts

## III. *Preparation of Leaders for Social-Evangelistic Work*

- (1) By means of Camps
- (2) By means of the Normal Course of the General Society of C. E.
- (3) By means of the Institutes of the Seminary

- (4) By the influence of the Pastor
  - (a) Intimate meals
  - (b) Hikes

## IV. *Seminary Institutes*

Let there be an adequate place in each region in which the Seminary may hold its Institutes."

# THE SCHOOLS

In the light of what has already been reported it can be seen that the wisdom of seeking to continue the schools was indeed questionable. It might be that we could carry on for a while with local officials favorable, as indeed they were both in Mazatlan and in Guadalajara. But there could be no assurance of permanence.

It is decided, however, to keep the upper classes of the Colegio in Guadalajara, with its residences for Mr. Neff and Professor Comacho. Mr. and Mrs. Neff are retained at Guadalajara, and Miss Margarita



Wright moved to Guadalajara, first of all for the sake of personal contacts, and also for the service that can be rendered through a changed form of work. Miss Wright will assist Miss Ramona Salazar in the social settlement, and later she can be of real service in training lay workers. The program proposed in the Colegio building was worked out by the educational workers, and follows:

"I. In connection with the Colegio International:

- (1) Student hostel.
- (2) Extension work with groups of working men, using students, following plan already initiated this past year.
- (3) Book-Store-Library in connection with Professor Camargo.
- (4) Cultural programs in the International, or the Colon.
- (5) Series of lectures in public buildings, by well known people, on up-to-date subjects.
- (6) Camps, with different groups.
- (7) Athletic clubs—basket ball, baseball, etc.
- (8) Contacts with University groups.

II. Brief course to prepare lay workers, from one to three months.

III. Courses to prepare social workers, brief ones, and also detailed longer ones.

The courses of study above to be worked out in detail later on.

IV. Preparation of literature and helps for these courses of study."

You will note in the program the brief courses for the preparation of lay workers, who will combine personal evangelism and religious education with welfare work. The thought would be to pick out capable and devoted personalities from our congregations and bring them to Guadalajara for such training, with the understanding that they should go back as volunteer workers, better fitted to serve the Master along these lines in connection with their daily work. It is recognized that this will have to be built up slowly at first, the numbers may be very small, but we believe there are possibilities in the effort.

THE SOCIAL WORK: So far, our social work in the Casa de Buena Voluntad has gone on without hindrance, except that the elementary school connected with it was



closed. In its place, Miss Salazar has put a nursery school, against which the law makes no restrictions. But Miss Salazar recognizes that here also there may be further restrictions, and further adjustments necessary. She, herself, suggests the following program to be worked out, which she believes could carry on even if the present social center were closed, although she sees no likelihood of that in the near future.

"(1) The Casa de Buena Voluntad will be the center of all our activities in social work in town and in rural districts.

(2) We will open three more social centers on a very small scale, in three suburbs in Guadalajara, which now have the following names: Mexicatzingo, La Capilla de Jesus, and El Retire. These communities are the poorest and most populated.

(3) One of these centers would be in charge of Miss Leonor Alvarez, and the other in charge of Mrs. Maria S. de Rodriguez.

(4) From the girls we have helping us now at the Casa, some of them will go to help Miss Alvarez and some others to Mrs. Rodriguez.

(5) In case the school for social work should open, the students from it would come and help at the 'Casa' which will be the main center.

(6) In case the social centers succeeded, they would be responsible to begin social work in rural communities.

(7) The Center at La Capilla de Jesus would do social work at Zapopan and Zoguipan.

(8) The Center in Mexicatzingo would do social work at San Pedro and San Andres, both rural communities.

(9) The work at the Casa de Buena Voluntad would be:

1. To serve as laboratory for the students in social work.

2. To be responsible for the success of the other centers, to provide them with methods, ideas, etc.

3. To do extension work in the city in the Penitentiary, the Hospital, and the Orphanage.

4. To develop to its fullest all the activities we now have.

5. To do social work during the weekends in Tlajomulco, Alualulco, and Ameca."

In addition to these policies which are proposed the Southern California Commission hopes to keep the contacts open. When necessary and possible, the Superintendent or another representative of the Commission will visit the field once each year.

From the field, we will continue the visits of the fraternal delegate of the Junta to our State Conference. Miss Ramona Salazar visited Southern California this summer as the missionary representative in our young people's High School Camps and to take further study in the summer school of the University of Southern California, with courses in Social Work. Her visit was of great help, both to the churches and to our young people, as they came into contact with her vivid personality. It was of help to her in getting rest, change, and opportunity for study.

## LOOKING BACK ACROSS THE BORDER

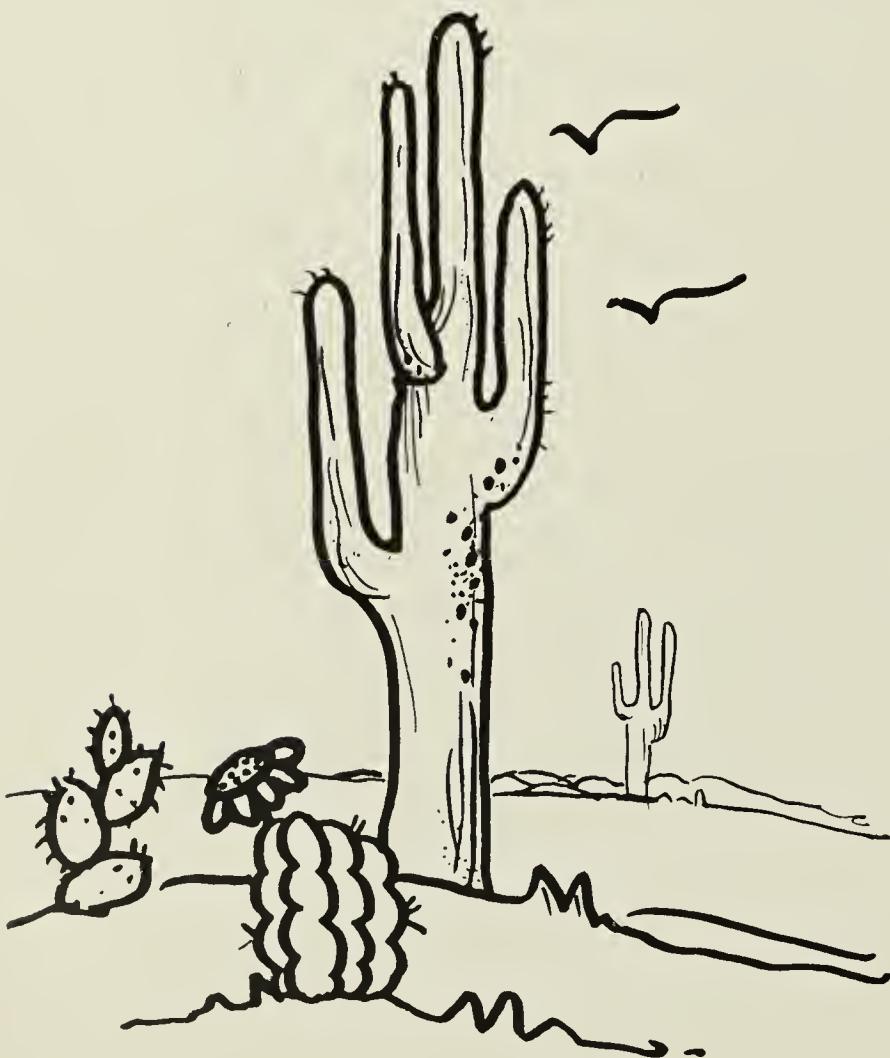
Such is Mexico at present. We have been looking at a mission and a country which is in transition. In many ways the work is hindered. In nearly all the work radical adjustments must be made to adapt ourselves to new conditions. But we shall not accept defeat.

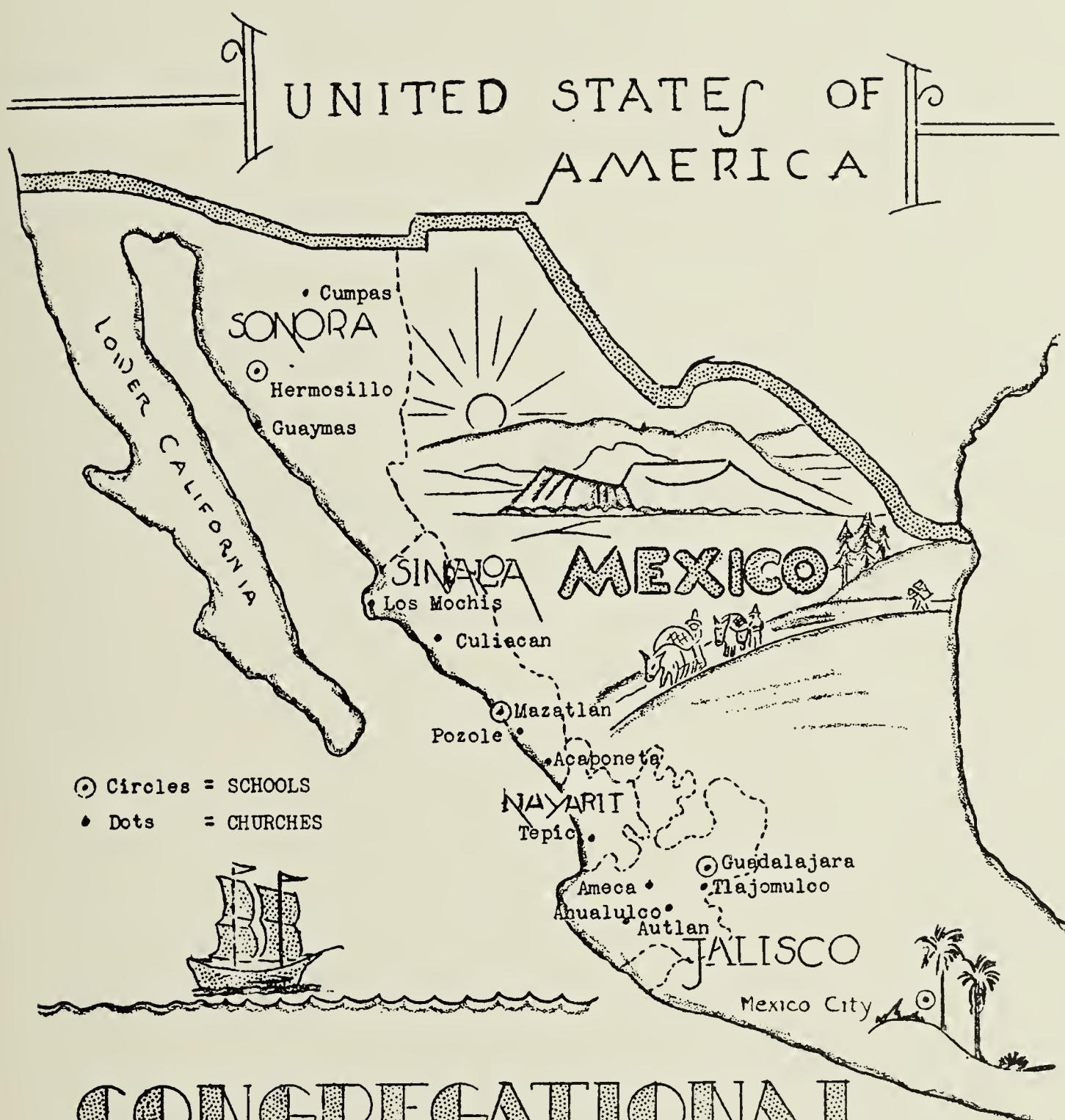
There is a spirit of new hope and confidence. It is difficult, but the very difficulties have made a great challenge to our

missionaries, and especially to our Mexican colleagues. They were never more humble, more conscious of need; at the same time they have never been more determined, more courageous, more convinced that Christianity cannot be defeated.

Without doubt, we face a partial suspension, if not the end of institutional work in Mexico, but we do not face the end of Christian work. We foresee a more realistic approach, with greater dependence upon lay workers, and greater development through responsibility of the Mexican Christians themselves.

All of which means not defeat, but a larger, truer success, as we work for the Kingdom of God in Mexico.





## CONGREGATIONAL WORK IN MEXICO

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